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UNH Celebrates Faculty Scholarship at Academic Convocation

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DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire will celebrate the scholarly and creative work of its faculty at the 2003 Academic Convocation Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2003, from 12:30 to 2 p.m., in the Piscataqua Room of Holloway Commons.

The convocation, “Dialogue on Discovery: Works in Progress by UNH Faculty” is free and open to the public. It will include remarks by Provost Bruce Mallory, Faculty Senate Chair Tom Laue, and President Ann Weaver Hart. Light refreshments will be available.

Cosponsored by the Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate, the convocation provides a forum for faculty members to present their scholarly pursuits by describing a particular project that is underway and near completion. The convocation also marks a number of important developments at the university, including the appointment of a new provost, the integration of academic affairs and student services, the shift from design work to implementation for the Academic Plan, and the initiation of pilot courses.

“The focus will not be on finished products; rather the focus will be on how key research questions are conceptualized, what the challenges are of pursuing those questions, how the work is connected to the broader body of scholarship within the respective disciplines, and how the work reflects the vision and mission of UNH as articulated in the Academic Plan,” Mallory said.

The faculty presenters will be:

- Jessica Bolker, associate professor of zoology, "From Lecture to Pond to Lab: The Journey of the Daphnia Girls"
- Sarah Sherman, associate professor of English, "Sacramental Shopping: United States Fictions and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism, 1868-1925"
- Robert Macieski, associate professor of history, UNHM, "Seeing is Believing: A Photographic Journey into the World of Child Labor"
- Steve Calculator, professor of communication sciences and disorders, "Unlocking the Door to Communication Through Enhanced Natural Gestures"

The impact of faculty research and scholarship is significant, particularly the impact on students. Sherman’s past research has resulted in the development of two new interdisciplinary courses. “My aim is to provide students with fresh approaches to well-known American writers, and to show how reading their work within the framework of modern consumer culture can illuminate

issues ranging from Americans' construction of racial identities to their pursuit of an often elusive happiness," she said. "Finally, an important goal of these courses is to teach my students how to think critically about the consumer culture in which they live, and to raise their awareness of its subtle and not-so-subtle effects on their own values and choices."

Her current research project is a book placing three well-known U.S. novels – "Little Women" by Louisa May Alcott, "The House of Mirth" by Edith Wharton and "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald -- at the intersection of modern consumer culture and Protestant conceptions of materialism and identity.

Calculator's findings have a direct impact on the education of children. His research primarily has been in the area of augmentative and alternative communication as it relates to children and adults with severe disabilities and their inclusion in schools and community life.

"My most recent research has examined the efficacy of teaching children with Angelman Syndrome, a disorder that results in severe communication deficits, to use a system of natural gestures, Enhanced Natural Gestures, to supplement communicative behaviors they are already using. By making parents, teachers and other professionals aware of children's communicative behaviors, and instructing them to use a variety of incidental teaching procedures, they have been able to teach their children to use a modest array of enhanced natural gestures," he said.